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COMMENT ON THE SITUATION IN SYRIA

[redacted] poses the most serious threat yet to President Shishakli. He retains control of Damascus, however, and unless major military elements defect, he will probably continue in power. In any event, Syrian stability has been more severely strained than at any time during his four-year old military dictatorship.

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The radio in Aleppo, Syria's largest city, has apparently been seized [redacted] who is attempting to stir up a popular revolt.

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[redacted] Between 3,000 and 6,000 troops are currently in northern Syria; the remainder of the 34,000-man army is in the south and apparently still loyal to Shishakli.

[redacted] There is no indication that the northern rebels have coordinated their efforts with the 100,000 Druzes in southwest Syria, who seem to have been immobilized by Shishakli's earlier action against them. There is likewise no evidence that any foreign power is immediately involved.

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In the past weeks, however, Syrian unrest has had repercussions in neighboring countries, and the present situation invites intervention. Despite this possibility, there is no indication of any full-scale outside military move against Syria.

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